

Russian parties maneuver for presidential race

by Konstantin Chermnykh

Konstantin Chermnykh is a journalist from St. Petersburg. His references which may not be familiar to an international audience are explained in the footnotes, which were supplied by EIR.

On May 23, Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) leader Gennadi Zyuganov was asked in one of the local Russian towns: "Well, are you going to run for the presidency in 1996?" "Don't know yet," Zyuganov grumbled. "The queue is too long, and I'm not fond of queueing."

Two weeks before, he wouldn't have answered in such an annoyed intonation. In late April, Zyuganov succeeded in his fight against his rival in the communist movement, former GKChP¹ supporter and Lefortovo² prisoner Oleg Shenin, who made an attempt to unite all the neo-communist parties of the former Soviet republics and rule them from the center in Moscow. Supported by his friend Pyotr Simonenko, leader of the Ukrainian Communist Party, Zyuganov declared that one shouldn't hurry, for it would be impossible to restore the U.S.S.R. right now: Communists should win in the former Soviet republics first. He spoke against a "dictatorship" from Moscow, offering the variant of "coordinating council" in the communist movement for uniting its efforts. The "republican" communist leaders (except Tajikistan) supported him, for their parties couldn't even be registered in their countries if they were considered as branches of an "all-Union"³ structure. So, Zyuganov tried to prove that it was necessary to restore (slowly, step by step) the Union first and then the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), not vice versa.

1. State Committee on the Emergency, the group that failed in a coup attempt against Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachov in August 1991.

2. The headquarters and prison of the Soviet KGB (secret police) and its Russian successors, in Moscow. Russian parliamentary and other leaders who resisted Boris Yeltsin's September-October 1993 abolition of Parliament were imprisoned there until amnestied by vote of the new Parliament in February 1994.

3. The term for nationwide organizations in the Soviet Union.

As a result of the mentioned discussion, Zyuganov prevented his party from splitting. The reason for a conflict in the communist movement was not only a question of strategy, but a question of ideology, too. Zyuganov's views are actually social-democratic with a nationalist hue, and not communist. He does not demand any "proletarian dictatorship" and repeats that "Russia can't bear any more revolutions, for it's a nuclear state." Still, he speaks of the Third Rome,⁴ though more in its historical aspects, approving the feats of great Russian czars and warriors, and the Orthodox Church patriarchs who struggled for the grandeur of power. He more often mentions State than Justice and Equality. In fact, his communism is a variation of "Russian soil," Slavophile ideology. The essence is protective, not liberating, and therefore is scarcely able to inspire young people. Though the CPRF is the biggest party in numbers, its popularity is only about 7%. The supporters of Yegor Gaidar have a little bit more public support, 8%. This is according to the pro-Yeltsin paper *Izvestia*, so probably the figures are a little bit distorted; still, the communists have no more than 10%, even in their own evaluations.

At the same time, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's⁵ popularity is quickly decreasing. Unlike Zyuganov, he did sign Yeltsin's Agreement on Accord,⁶ and at once lost a huge part of his supporters. For even the Gorbachovists, by which I mean Grigori Yavlinsky,⁷ did not sign this document.

For Yavlinsky, this was probably his only successful action to make himself popular during the last months. The

4. The Muscovite and Russian imperial ideology since the 15th century holding that Moscow is the successor of Rome and Constantinople, "the Third Rome, and a fourth is not to be."

5. Leader of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, which won the largest vote percentage in the Dec. 12, 1993 parliamentary elections, who stridently voices nationalist and imperial themes.

6. Yeltsin seeks pledges from parties and organizations to refrain from agitational opposition to his regime, in the name of civic peace.

7. The economist who drafted reform recommendations under Gorbachov and co-headed an electoral slate in December 1993 and entered Parliament.

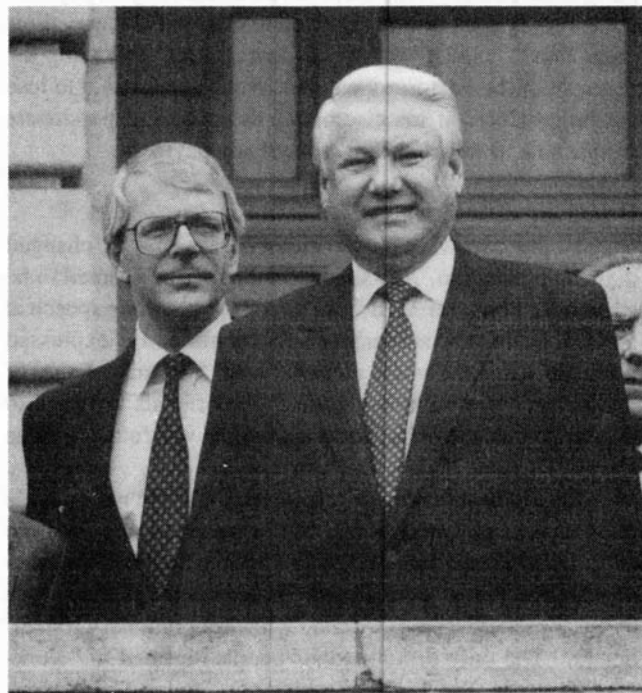
man seems to be so sure of being Yeltsin's successor that he makes no real effort to sustain his image. One Yavlinsky supporter who visited him recently with a group of journalists came away with a feeling of disgust. "He's become so fat and self-assured that he may burst with self-pride," this person said (now he will not vote for Yavlinsky).

Gorbachov's moves

Mikhail Gorbachov seems to be already a little bit anxious. Recently he visited St. Petersburg and met with students of the university. Gorbachov never gives straight answers, but one could understand that he didn't exclude the possibility of putting forward his own candidacy for President of Russia. However, there are rumors that he is looking for another "extra" figure, besides Yavlinsky. The Gorbachophilic sociologists in Petersburg, whose results for the last half year have always favored Yavlinsky, suddenly included a new name in their poll—the occultist-surgeon Prof. Svyatoslav Fyodorov; and he allegedly was found very popular by the intelligentsia polled. Communist Anatoli Lukyanov (formerly speaker of the U.S.S.R. Parliament, Gorbachov's high-school mate betrayed by him in August 1991 and imprisoned in Lefortovo) mentions Professor Fyodorov on a list of the most wealthy people in Russia. Other, non-communist sources don't reject this version. The professor's wealth is not explained by his professional skill. Fyodorov is spoken of as a person who controls a huge part of the gambling business in Moscow. The results of the Petersburg poll seem to be quite unreliable. Fyodorov's name hadn't been mentioned in the mass media for almost two years after he failed in rivalling Gaidar for the prime minister's appointment (autumn 1991).

Yuri Skokov, former chief of the Security Council and leader of the Producers Federation, has been mysteriously silent for the last month—probably since the episode when his name was mentioned in the provocative "Version No. 1," made up by Gorbachovists when Yeltsin was allegedly dying of cancer (for the third time) in a health resort. It seems almost sure that Skokov was frightened then and crawled back into his "shell." But cowardly politicians are never praised by Russians. Besides, his alliance with Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov will also diminish his chance for popularity. There are too many rumors of Luzhkov's being corrupted and publications of this sort, not only in the opposition press. The newly elected (with a huge number of violations) Moscow Assembly (City Duma) has become a toy in Luzhkov's hands. Those "radical democrats" who vote there for raising residential rents get free passes and were rewarded with trips abroad. Luzhkov had been going to run for the presidency himself, but he was obviously too much involved in "dividing up the skin of the bear who turned out to be quite alive."

Yegor Gaidar is violently trying to change his own stripes



Boris Yeltsin at a meeting of the Group of Seven in Tokyo, July 1993. (Behind him is Britain's Prime Minister John Major.) Some of those Yeltsin put in jail last fall are now coming back to challenge him.

and to look like a fighter against corruption. These attempts seem to be quite hopeless: The peak of corruption and disaster is too closely associated with the period of his rule, when billions of rubles and tons of precious minerals streamed out of the country through officials' hands. Besides, Gaidar has not even succeeded in building up his party apparatus. The remnants of Democratic Russia, including its leaders Ponomarev and Yakunin, do not obey him. They prefer to keep their distance from him and to construct a party of their own, but will surely fail, too, for their recent fuss around the "President's ear" could not "raise" them as politicians. They are trying now to "hire" the former finance minister, London-linked monetarist Boris Fyodorov, but he is also not very eager to deal with these "hurrah-democratic" shouters whose time had evidently passed. Still they go on shouting, just like Gaidar and the communists: They shout of corruption that should be fought, and the social needs that should be satisfied on behalf of criminal officials expropriated. The whole political spectrum uses left-wing, socialist-like slogans. They are often combined with nationalism. One Democratic Russia activist, Aleksei Manannikov, addressed the Defense Ministry with an appeal to annex the Crimea Peninsula from Ukraine by military force.

Still, the liberal parties have become so small and unpopular that their attempts to "change their stripes" look desperate and often funny. The communists, having the biggest

party in the country, seemed to have a chance to gain popularity again. Zyuganov was expected to change the name of his party into "socialist" or "social-democratic," following the example of the East European left. But he was afraid to lose the biggest part of his electorate, the poor and passionate people able to work for him without any payment.

Rutskoy emerges

The last two weeks after Victory Day, May 9, changed the whole situation. Aleksandr Rutskoy,⁸ who seemed to be silent after being released from prison, gave a long speech at a public rally that attracted much attention. He expressed hope that Russians would meet the next, 50th anniversary of the victory "without this regime." The officials appealed to the public prosecutor but nothing criminal was found in these words.

Rutskoy took his next step on May 21. He restored his party structure, formerly one of the reformist wings of the CPSU, and gave it the name of the Russian Social-Democratic People's Party. It is almost similar to the name of the CPSU's predecessor, associated with "revolutionary romanticism." The only difference is "people" instead of "workers." Actually, Rutskoy uses a kind of a "code" which draws attention to him and his people and gives the left-wing opposition a greater hope for its victory. The third thing Rutskoy did was to issue a huge book about himself with all his speeches and interviews, including a photo where he stands, with a beard (right after Lefortovo), with a czar's portrait in the background. He (or maybe his advisers) really found the sensitive points of the Russian mentality.

These tactics of Rutskoy's proved to be more than effective. Now, most of those who were going to support Valeri Zorkin⁹ or Gennadi Zyuganov sympathize with Rutskoy and think him to be the only capable candidate for the presidency. Now his only real rivals seem to be Yeltsin and Zhirinovskiy. But several businessmen who had been supplying Zhirinovskiy are already going to change their stake for Rutskoy.

Zyuganov probably deeply regrets the fussing about and making up the "Accord in the Name of Russia"¹⁰ movement for Zorkin and himself when rumors of Yeltsin's imminent death were widespread. Its creators called Rutskoy, and he was not eager to join, but then agreed. Now this newly created structure, including the greater part of the communist movement, will be at his disposal. The First National Council of the movement was planned on May 28. Zyuganov proposed that Rutskoy should speak fifth or sixth. "I will speak first," Rutskoy said. And no one objected.

8. The vice president of Russia who opposed Yeltsin's September 1993 takeover and was jailed in Lefortovo with members of the Parliament.

9. Former head of Russia's Constitutional Court.

10. The patriotic manifesto issued by leaders of the opposition to Yeltsin's policies, including Zyuganov, Zorkin, and Rutskoy.

London, IAEA demand Korea confrontation

by Kathy Wolfe

The British and their nuclear police at the U.N.'s International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna have brought the crisis over North Korea's nuclear program to "irreversible confrontation," Gerald Segal of the London International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) told a journalist on June 4. There will be "some military conflict," he said, since North Korea will "retaliate" if the U.N. imposes sanctions, and "this will set off a dynamic response against them."

Yet the United States must follow the IAEA lead and declare sanctions, or else "we are a joke," said Segal, an American who works in London for the British and who this spring was declared *persona non grata* by Beijing, for predicting civil war and the breakup of China. The integrity of the U.N.'s Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is at stake, and North Korea must be "taught a lesson," so that the "costs of flouting the NPT" will be "taken seriously" by others, he said. Otherwise, "the balance of power in Asia will shift" to the disadvantage of the West. "We need to act," he insisted.

Contrary to IISS and the western media, however, it was not North Korea, but the IAEA which began the crisis. During recent inspections of North Korea's Yongbyon reactor, IAEA officials abruptly walked out of the North Korean capital of Pyongyang on June 2, and IAEA Director Hans Blix issued a harsh condemnation of North Korea to the U.N. Security Council. IAEA inspectors had been told by the North Korean government for weeks before coming that sampling the reactor core would not be allowed; but they came, demanded it anyway, and when refused, threw a tantrum.

"The Clinton administration and all of us are at the mercy of the IAEA's technical people," said one exasperated Washington Korea expert on June 3. "It's been the North's position all along that they want an integrated diplomatic package, of U.S. diplomatic recognition, and help in rebuilding a non-plutonium nuclear industry from the United States [see *EIR*, May 6, p. 51].

"But if they let the U.N. take samples, they have no cards left to play. So North Korea told the U.N. clearly: Until the U.S. recognizes us, we can't let you IAEA folks sample the fuel rods. The IAEA caused the problem. The IAEA knew if they went now, and insisted 'we must take samples or the world will end,' it would provoke confrontation; and that is